

The Mad Hatter

A Douglas College Newsletter

July 19, 1988

Exciting New Job for Gerry

It's a long way from New Westminster to the city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, but Gerry DellaMattia has never been one to shy away from challenges.

In 18 years as an administrator at Douglas College, the affable Dean of Educational and Student Services has tirelessly worked to improve the education system.

Initially, he began as registrar, later becoming a Dean, and recently has even taken on a few challenges just for the fun of it—such as donning professional wrestling gear as "The Dean of Destruction" to raise money for student scholarships.

But moving to the oil-rich Middle Eastern country of 1.8 million people may be the greatest challenge yet.

Last month, DellaMattia was informed that he had been hired as the Director of Central Services for a system of new technical colleges in the U.A.E.

With his new Doctorate in Educational Policy and Management in hand, DellaMattia, his wife, and two daughters will leave their Surrey home in August. By September he will be helping open the first of the new college campuses.

The dominant religion in the country is Muslim and the entire college system will be segregated by sex, DellaMattia says.

"We'll really have to adjust our lifestyle for the two years we're over there," he admits. "That means we probably won't be eating a lot of steak."

And the two-year posting will also give DellaMattia a strong grounding in the needs of international education students, which will come in handy when he returns to Douglas College.

Eventually, DellaMattia will oversee the set-up of seven college campuses on the north-east side of the Saudi Arabian peninsula. The first college programs will be in the disciplines of business, electronics, civil engineering and technology.

And as his term expires, the colleges will expand into the fields of health sciences, communications, mechanical engineering, graphics and broadcasting.

"Basically, they're starting from scratch," he says.

The political leaders of the U.A.E., seven sheiks and an overall cabinet, hope to use the college system to turn the relatively new country (formed from a British Protectorate in 1971) into a self-sufficient state.

And while the climate may be hot, DellaMattia takes comfort in knowing he will be helping an entire nation get onto its feet.

"The whole family's excited," he says. "My youngest will have to finish school over there, and the other hopes to find work."

And maybe it's no coincidence that DellaMattia began his career at Douglas College the same year the United Arab Emirates were formed. ■

THANK YOU

A sincere thanks to all who attended the wine & cheese party and to those who expressed their farewell in other ways.

Your warm wishes are much appreciated. I will miss you.

Gerry DellaMattia

CAREER RESOURCE FAIR A SUCCESS

Keeping in the spirit of National Access Awareness Week, Douglas College, hosted a Career Resource Fair for people with disabilities. It was one of the most successful events of the week.

Over 100 people participated in 45 information booths representing post-secondary institutions, agencies who provide employment services and/or training for disabled people, and federal and provincial government offices. It is estimated that 500 people visited the fair.

One exciting aspect of the fair was the assistance provided by Douglas College students who have disabilities. These students assisted participants in setting up the booths and provided guiding, mobility and reading assistance for visitors. The presence and assistance provided by the students with disabilities was a great asset.

Another important aspect was the participation by the B.C. Educational Association of Disabled Students. B.C.E.A.D.S. was a co-sponsor of the fair and assisted in the planning; they also were responsible for the evaluation forms. Several new memberships have resulted from the exposure B.C.E.A.D.S. had at the fair.

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RESOURCE FAIR continued

It is a good experience for service professionals and student groups to work together in planning and hosting a successful activity. This is especially true when the activity promotes services, programs and equipment to assist people with disabilities in making career plans.

Gladys Loewen

ACTING DEAN

Gerry DellaMattia will be leaving Douglas College as of July 18, 1988. The selection of an Acting Dean is currently underway but is not expected to be completed for 2 to 3 weeks.

Until such time as a replacement is selected, Al Atkinson will be Acting Dean.

Bill Day

RECENT BOARD APPOINTMENTS

During the past month the College has welcomed two new appointments to the College Board. They are Mrs. Marie Kadatz, of Coquitlam, B.C., and Mr. Ronald Stevenson, of Maple Ridge, B.C.

Mrs. Kadatz is a former elementary teacher, and a former student of Douglas College in the Creative Writing Program. Her achievement in that program placed her on the Dean's List. She is currently completing a Bachelor of General Studies Degree at S.F.U.

Mrs. Katdatz is a writer of children's stories, and an editorial assistant for *EVENT*, the Douglas College Review Magazine. She has been active as a community volunteer for the Cancer Society.

Mr. Stevenson is a post-graduate of the Canadian Army Staff College and the U.S. Army Command & General Staff College and holds a B.A. degree from UBC. He is a veteran of the Second World War having served in the RCAF from 1943 to 1945, and also served with the Canadian Army from 1948 to 1972.

Mr. Stevenson has served in the field of educational administration both with the Vancouver School Board and PVI. As a community member he is past President of the Maple Ridge Elderly Citizens Accommodation Society.

A special welcome to them both.

Bill Morfey

Gala Choral Concert

The City of New Westminster, the Douglas College Amabilis Singers, and the British Columbia Choral Federation are privileged to present in concert the internationally renowned ROYAL ACADEMY CHAMBER CHOIR OF STOCKHOLM under the direction of Eric Ericson. This famous choir and their conductor will be in-residence at Douglas College from August 5-7 and will be performing one concert only on Saturday, August 6, at 8:00 p.m., at Queen's Avenue United Church in New Westminster. Ticket prices are \$8/\$5 at the door, through the Douglas College Box Office, or a Touch of Sweden, 4th Avenue, Vancouver.

The Gala Concert will also feature British Columbia Choral Federation's Choral Challenge '88 Choir - A chorus of select singers and conductors from across the United States and Canada. Sharing the podium with Eric Ericson will be Vancouver's own Jon Washburn, Artistic Director of the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

The music will consist of Swedish and Canadian Choral Literature and will include both contemporary and traditional selections.

Don't miss this one-time opportunity to hear this world-class choir in concert - the Royal Academy Chamber Choir of Stockholm under the direction of Eric Ericson along with the Choral Challenge '88 Choir under the direction of Jon Washburn on Saturday, August 6, 8:00 p.m., Queen's Avenue United Church, New Westminster. Tickets at the door \$8/\$5 and at A Touch of Sweden on 4th Avenue, Vancouver.

For more information contact Diane Loomer, B.C. Choral Federation at 733-9687.



WE CAN'T TAKE IT WITH US

After 18 years in the same house we have accumulated "a lot of stuff". We can't take it with us to the United Arab Emirates.

We are selling many items at a huge moving sale on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 22, 23 and 24. We are also selling the following items: KIMBALL UPRIGHT PIANO \$1100, UPRIGHT FREEZER \$200, CONSOLE STYLE STEREO \$150, COUCHES (suitable for cottage) \$40, SMALL HOMEMADE STUDENT DESKS \$15, SWIVEL ROCKER \$50, SWIVEL OFFICE CHAIR \$25, LAMPS \$25.

For information on these items phone Gerry or Lorraine DellaMattia at 588-4733 or bring a friend and come to 11020 Swan Crescent, Surrey on the days of the sale.

INTERIM STUDENT SOCIETY PRESIDENT

Please be advised that as of Wednesday, July 6, Carla Crozier shall be acting President of the Douglas College Student Society. She will be in this position until August 31, 1988.

Merrilyn Houlihan

JOB VACANCIES

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) is recruiting health personnel to undertake a one to two year contract position with a college of health sciences in Kuwait.

The following positions are available:

1. Medical-Surgical Nursing Instructors - 3 positions
2. Community Health Nursing Instructors - 2 positions
3. Maternal Health Nursing Instructor - 1 position
4. Psychiatric Nursing Instructor - 1 position

Further information on these positions is available on the Bulletin Board in the Personnel Office.

FOR SALE

5 speed hatchback, 70,000 km on '81 engine (professionally installed) New brakes, muffler, front end work. Sun roof, am/fm radio. Blue w/black interior. Asking \$3,000. Call Jan at 521-6404.



B.C. Choral Federation
presents direct from Sweden...

The Royal Academy Chamber Choir of Stockholm & Canada's Choral Challenge '88 Choir

directed by
ERIC ERICSON &
JON WASHBURN

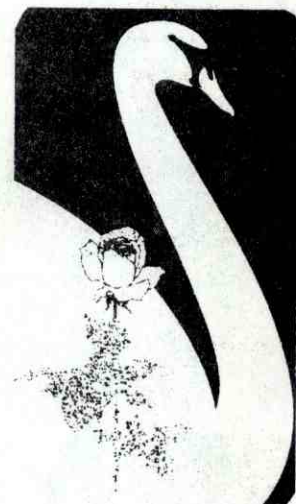
Saturday,
August 6, 1988
8:00 pm

QUEEN'S AVENUE UNITED CHURCH
529 Queen's Ave., New Westminster
(4 blocks from SkyTrain Terminus)

General Admission \$8 Students/Seniors \$5

► Tickets available at A TOUCH OF SWEDEN
(2163 W. 4th Ave., Vancouver - 731-1314)
and at the door.

► For more information call 228-8595



1988 SUMMER SEMESTER**GROUP ADVISING SESSIONS SCHEDULE****JULY 18 - 22, 1988**

All sessions start promptly at times advertised and are approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours in length. Sessions are free, pre-registration is not required. All sessions are held at the New Westminster Campus unless stated otherwise.

**Business Management Non-Transferable
Career Programs Certificate and Diploma
(Acc, Adm Mgmt, CIS, Con Mgmt, Gen, Mrk)**

Monday, July 18
1000 hours
Room 3903
Sharon

**Dental Auxiliary Programs
(Basic Chairside and
Certified Dental Assistant)**

Tuesday, July 19
1400 hours
Room 3820
Sharon

Arts Management Program

Wednesday, July 20
1000 hours
Room 3903
Georgina

**Commerce & Business Administration
University transfer programs to
UBC and SFU**

Friday, July 22
1400 hours
Room 3820
Georgina

1988 SUMMER SEMESTERGROUP ADVISING SESSIONS SCHEDULEJULY 25 - 29, 1988

All sessions start promptly at times advertised and are approximately 1 1/2 - 2 hours in length. Sessions are free, pre-registration is not required. All sessions are held at the New Westminster Campus unless stated otherwise.

First-Year Arts - University Transfer
Including Major requirements and
pre-entry requirements for Bachelor
of Social Work

Monday, July 25
1000 hours
Room 3903
Sharon

First-Year Science - University Transfer
Including Major requirements and
pre-entry requirements for professional
programs

Tuesday, July 26
1400 hours
Room 3820
Sharon

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN?



Probably not! Glen James has been in Burnaby General Hospital since May 30th recovering from major surgery. The man in the blue smock won't be back at the College for about six months. He would love visitors or a card to relieve the boredom (the Nurses would like a break too!). He's in Ward 4C, Room 467 for at least another week or two.

GET WELL SOON GLEN!

**P.S.: To help you find him please remember
his proper name is Robert Glen James**

EXECUTIVE FOCUS

President

THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

Commonwealth Heads of Government intend to create an institution for Commonwealth co-operation in distance education. It is proposed to establish an Agency for this purpose, in the second half of 1988, to be called the Commonwealth of Learning, planning for which is now in its final phase. The objective of the Commonwealth of Learning is to promote human resource development through a sharing of Commonwealth distance education experience and resources. The Agency will have functions in the exchange of information about distance education, in staff training and institutional development and in promoting the sharing of distance-education materials. This is a major initiative to which Heads of Government attach high importance.

The President will be the executive head of the Agency, which will have the status of an international organisation and its headquarters in Vancouver, Canada. Reporting to a board of governors drawn from Commonwealth countries, the President will develop and oversee co-operative projects involving educational institutions in a network throughout the Commonwealth and will secure support from governments and other sources for the expansion of this work.

Candidates must be citizens of a Commonwealth country and are likely to be educational leaders of international stature who combine international experience, an understanding of the application of distance education in development, excellent inter-personal skills, and demonstrated ability in government relations, management and fund-raising. The successful candidate must have the energy, initiative and innovative ability to launch the new organisation.

Emoluments will be comparable to those of heads of major educational institutions in Canada, and would attract appropriate allowances for an overseas appointee. The initial contract will be for five years.

Persons who may wish to be considered for the post of President are invited to write in confidence, enclosing their CV and the names of three referees, marking the envelope "Commonwealth of Learning", to:

**The Commonwealth Secretary-General
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX**

Further information is available from Mr Peter R. C. Williams, Director, Education Programme, at the same address and he will be glad to respond to enquiries about the post.

Applications or nominations should reach the Secretary-General by August 31, 1988



The TEACHING PROFESSOR

Volume 2, Number 6

June, 1988

Can Self-Evaluation Improve Instruction?

Self-evaluation isn't effective, says Peter Seldin. Writing in the Spring 1982 issue of *College Teaching*, Seldin says, "Self-analysis holds limited promise to improve teaching. Some teachers are stumped on how to evaluate classroom performance. Others can identify teaching weaknesses but are at a loss as to how to proceed from the identification to the correction. Still others are taken in by the illusions of themselves as superb teachers" (p. 71).

Seldin's points have merit. Teaching requires a huge investment of self, and such highly personal involvement always threatens objectivity. But I find myself disagreeing with his conclusions. Most of us teach because we believe in the value of what we have learned. We want to share that experience with others. This underlying commitment to the teaching-learning process is a foundation for the case that self-evaluation can improve instruction. Seldin's objections do not constitute inherent impediments to self-evaluation, but rather removable barriers.

First, Seldin says teachers are stumped on how to evaluate classroom performance. True, but we can "un-stump" teachers. All sorts of ways to evaluate classroom performance exist. And we can show teachers how to choose among and use them.

The beauty of self-evaluation is that, rather than having the institution prescribe the method, you select or even create methods of your own. Self-evaluation lets you ask the questions about teaching that most interest you. Because you make these key decisions, you tend to look at the feedback more seriously, which will probably increase its impact on your instruction.

Could instructors be stumped because they don't know the "right" or "best" way to self-evaluate? Sure, because it has yet to be discovered. What's right or best depends on what the individual wants to find out. Closed questions help to develop comprehensive instructional awareness (if you ask enough of them). Open-ended questions identify ideas. Videotape helps with the mechanics of presentation, and so on.

Instructors may be stumped about the mechanics of evaluation, but what really dooms self-evaluation is the notion some have that it's always based just on internal feedback: the instructor's impression of how it's all going. Wishful thinking isn't the kind of self-evaluation I'm talking about. Instructors cannot sit under a tree, contemplate how they teach, and come up with objective evaluations. But they can, with a very mechanical and descriptive view in mind, and some coaching on how to observe themselves, take intermittent peeks at what's going on in class and make some valuable discoveries. (Our March 1987 issue offers advice on how to do this.)

But even that alone is not enough. To compensate for one's vested interest, one's view of his instructional self must always be held up against the bright light of input from others. All instructors -- not some -- can, with the help of others, cultivate the required objectivity and evaluate their teaching.

Attacking Your Strengths

But then, Seldin says, they don't know what to do about the weaknesses. That's another valid, but answerable, objection. Most faculty teach without training in teaching and with limited ideas about alternative approaches. But why can't they ask peer reviewers to suggest alternatives? It seems like a natural part of the feedback process, but few of our evaluation activities emphasize its importance.

Teaching can be improved in two ways: by removing weaknesses and by developing strengths. But, strengths can't be developed unless the instructor knows they exist. Obviously, evaluation activities ought to be designed so they discover strengths along with weaknesses. While an instructor may not know what to do about the weaknesses, perhaps he or she can start by further emphasizing what works well with students. Teaching will best be improved if the weaknesses are removed and the strengths developed, but beginning by working on the strengths will benefit the instruction and encourage the instructor.

As for those who suffer delusions of grandeur about themselves in the classroom, again, give Seldin the point, but not the conclusion. Some faculty do teach

oblivious to their impact on students. However, a distinction can be made between those who make it sound like they walk on water in the classroom and those who believe that's where they walk. Some faculty feel pressured to speak highly of their in-class performance. Does that mean they believe all they say? Evidence that things are not going well in a class is difficult to miss, especially from the vantage point at the front of the room.

But it's always seemed to me that self-evaluation discourages delusions of grandeur because it affords the instructor a certain amount of protection. It does occur under your aegis and control. That makes it easier to look with honesty and openness. And doesn't the whole notion of self-evaluation imply some personal purpose? No, it doesn't make any sense to ask instructors to write candid assessments of how they teach and then include those in promotion and tenure dossiers. But it does make a great deal of sense to ask them to look candidly at how they teach for the purpose of understanding and implementing improvements. Self-assessments, I say, should not be collected for public dissemination. But private self-assessments, including input from others, contribute significantly to a realistic understanding of how you teach.

I cast my vote for self-assessment. I think it's a viable improvement strategy. Like any other, it doesn't work automatically; it isn't an effortless way to better teaching. But I give it much more than "limited promise" to improve teaching. After all, let's never forget who has ultimate control over any improvement strategy. You do. You decide what you will or will not do in class tomorrow. I say self-evaluation recognizes and builds on that vested interest in teaching. □

Teaching Aid

Teaching Journals: A Self-Evaluation Strategy

When you teach a course for the first time, or teach a course just recently revised, or one you teach only intermittently, consider this way of preparing for the next time you're assigned to teach the course. Take 10 or 15 minutes after each class session and write in a journal, or in the folder where you keep your course notes, or even on the lecture notes themselves -- some quick notes about how the class session went. Identify sections that were or were not smooth, places where you needed examples, questions students asked and you did or did not answer well, how the activities were received, the idea for a test question that came to you during the lecture, or any other impressions that linger in your mind. Finish by listing the three things that most need to be done to improve this day in class. Make sure at least one of the items can be

completed in 15 minutes. Be realistic. Some days 15 minutes is about all you can squeeze out for prep time.

We can't take credit for this good idea. A faculty member we know admits she stumbled upon it once when teaching a class for the first time. She was in the middle of a lecture when a student asked for an example to illustrate the point she was trying to make. She came up cold, asked the class for help and got three good examples. She wrote them in her notes so she would have them for the next time. The next day she botched an explanation, and found herself circling it on her notes with the large admonition "FIX THIS!" Intermittently throughout that semester she wrote notes to herself, noting the "few things" that worked well, too. She did not realize the value of it until next time she taught the course. "I had all these suggestions and ideas. Even the short notes brought back all sorts of other memories of the class -- things I know I would never have remembered otherwise."

The part of the strategy that makes it tough is finding or taking the 10 minutes directly after class to write the notes. That's the best time to do it. The freshness of the experience will add to the quality of what you write and the speed with which you are able to write it. But after class, students tend to follow you back to the office, or you have to teach another class, or you have this feeling of being done and who wants to rehash a completed class? But your commitment to take the time determines the value of this activity. Self-evaluation strategies like this one can be effective, but only one person makes them work -- you. □

TEACHING PROFESSOR

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The Teaching Professor is published monthly, 12 times a year, by Magna Publications, Inc., 2718 Dryden Drive, Madison, WI 53704-3006. Phone (608) 249-2455. One year subscription: \$39. Second-class postage paid at Madison, WI. Postmaster: send change of address to *The Teaching Professor*, 2718 Dryden Drive, Madison, WI 53704-3006 Copyright 1988, Magna Publications, Inc..

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